

Selma University, Selma, Ala.

Rev. R. T. Pollard, D. D., President

SELMA UNIVERSITY, originally named Alabama Baptist Normal and Theological School, and once known as Alabama Baptist Colored University, is the product of earnest and faithful endeavor.

Early as 1873 men who had recently been freed from slavery began to consult among themselves whether or not there should be established a school in which men who proposed to enter the ministry, and men and women who expected to be teachers and leaders along other lines, might be educated.

Rev. W. H. McAlpine was the founder of the institution. Because of his indomitable will and energy, a set of resolutions, looking towards establishing the institution, and which had previously been voted down by the Alabama Baptist State Convention, was reconsidered and voted favorably upon, even against the advice of the White Baptist State Convention of Alabama, which was in session at the same time and in the same city as the Colored Convention.

The institution opened its doors January, 1878. During the thirty years of its existence its progress has been marvelous. The first ten years were years of perils and misgivings, for the promoters did not fully understand that it requires money, and much of it, to run an institution. Near the close of the first decade the institution found itself nearly ten thousand dollars in debt, with no visible avenue for getting out. Almost weekly for one year the creditors threatened to close its doors. The sheriff was daily expected to take charge of the property for the benefit of its creditors.

Loyal Negro Baptists of Alabama

"Man did not see the way out, but God did." There were thirty-six acres of land belonging to the property. The Board of trustees sold six acres and applied the money to the debt. Then Revs. W. H. McAlpine and J. Q. A. Wilhite were appointed financial agents in order to raise the balance on the debt. The Negro Baptists of Alabama stood by them until the last cent of the debt was paid in 1890. Following the liquidation of the debt, steps were taken to erect a dormitory for girls. The building, containing forty-eight rooms, was erected at a cost of about eight thousand dollars, the women of the state being

the leaders in this undertaking. This project caused another heavy debt which was wiped out in 1898. The brick to erect the building, as well as those for buildings erected subsequently, were made by student and other labor on the premises of the institution. During all this time, beginning with the close of the school year of 1884, the institution was sending out graduates who were being scattered everywhere to bless mankind.

Dinkins Memorial Chapel Erected

It was not long after the debt for the first building had been cancelled before the board of trustees, by the suggestion of President Dinkins, began raising money for another building; but not more than about fifteen hundred dollars for this building, to cost \$18,000, had been raised, before President Dinkins (in 1901) was called to his reward.

After a year's inactivity, so far as this new building was concerned, the present incumbent (R. T. Pollard), who was made president, was charged in 1902 with the duty of completing the work. In less than two years a four-story brick structure of the best material was erected and named "Dinkins Memorial Chapel," in honor of former President Dinkins, who began the work, but was not allowed to finish it. This building was erected with brick made on the school grounds by student and other labor, has large recitation rooms on the first and second floors, an auditorium on the third floor that will seat twelve or fifteen hundred, and a dormitory of eighteen commodious rooms on the fourth floor.

The Institution Grows Steadily

The University grows steadily and substantially along all lines. It has a faculty of 19 teachers, graduates from some of the best colleges and universities in this country.

The numerical growth of the institution has been most flattering. There are 762 students, of whom about four hundred are non-resident. There are 74 ministerial and theological students. The departments are: literary, theological, and industrial. The literary embraces academic and college courses, and the industrial includes fancy and plain sewing, millinery and domestic science. There have gone out from the institution about four hundred graduates, who are now filling important places as pastors, home and foreign missionaries, medical doctors, pharmacists, clerks, merchants, farmers, housekeepers, teachers, and college presidents.